

May-time in Local Theaters



THE DOLLY SISTERS—BELASCO—WED.



HENRY WALTHALL IN
"THE BIRTH OF A NATION"
NATIONAL



KITTY GORDON
IN PICTURES
CRANDALL'S



JAMES GAY—
MASK AND WIG CLUB
BELASCO—TOMORROW



JESSIE BROWN
KEITH'S



HAROLD KENNEDY
POLI'S



HARRY ROGERS
—LYCEUM—



GERALDINE
FARRAR
IN PICTURES
LOEW'S COLUMBIA



JEAN LEIGHTON
—GAYETY—



MABEL TALIAFERRO—
IN PICTURES—STRANO

Theatrical Baedeker.

Belasco—Tomorrow night—
The Mask and Wig Club of the
University of Pennsylvania in
their annual frolic, this year
bearing the title of "Whoa
Phoebe."

Belasco, beginning Wednes-
day—"His Bridal Night." Pre-
miere of a new farce by a new
writer featuring the Dolly Sis-
ters.

National—"The Birth of a
Nation."
Poli's—"Faust," with A. H.
Van Buren as Mephisto.
Keith's—Vaudeville.
Loew's Columbia—Paramount
Pictures.

Gaiety and Lyceum—Bur-
lesque.
Cosmos—Vaudeville.
Garden, Strand, Crandall's
and Hippodrome—Feature
Films.

olio, among which is an exposition
of classic and Oriental dances by
Mlle. La Grace. The runway, extend-
ing from the stage, down into the
audience, will continue to be a
feature.

Casino—Feature Films.
The photoplay production, "The
Dumb Girl of Portici," in which
Anna Pavlova, the world-famous
danseuse makes her first appear-
ance before the motion picture
camera, has been held over for
another week's showing at the
Casino. "The Dumb Girl of
Portici" is founded on the opera
"Masaniello" and pictures a coun-
try overburdened with taxation im-
posed by a licentious grand duke. As
Pavlova, the dumb girl, Mlle. Pavlova
is afforded frequent opportunities to
display her talents as a dancer. The
cast appearing in her support, besides
her own Russian ballet, includes
Rupert Julian, Douglas Gerrard, Edna
Watson, and William W. Schaefer,
and William W. Schaefer. The picture
was directed by Lois Weber and
Phillips Smalley at the Universal studios.

Garden—Feature Films.
Billie Burke pictured in "Gloria's
Romance" will constitute the head-
line attraction at Moore's Garden
Theater today, tomorrow and Tues-
day. "Gloria's Romance" was espe-
cially written for Miss Burke by
Mr. and Mrs. Rupert Hughes. The
program on these days will include
the film production of A. H. Wood-
ward, "Big Jim Garrity" in which
Robert Edison posed in the leading
role.

On Wednesday and Thursday the
principal feature will be "Lying Lips,"
a story of the stage, whose main
scene depicts a panic upon the New
York Stock Exchange. In this picture
the leading roles are handled by
Winifred Greenwood, Franklin Ritche,
Eugene Ford, Clarence Burton and
other Mutual stars. The auxiliary
attraction will be Frank Daniels in a
comedy entitled "Mr. Jack's Artistic
Sense." On Friday and Saturday D. W. Griffith
will present Lillian Gish in "Sold for
Marriage." Sennett's Keystone com-
edians in "The Other Man" will form
the auxiliary attraction.

Strand—Feature Films.
At Moore's Strand Theater today, to-
morrow and Tuesday Mary Boland
and Frank Keenan will be pictured in
Thomas Ince's film play, "The Stepping
Stone." The auxiliary feature will be
Sennett's latest comedy, "Bucking Se-

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Premiere of New Farce Exploiting Dolly Sisters Revives Flagging Season

By JULIA CHANDLER.

May-time in local theaters, as everywhere else, finds the current dramatic year on the wane, the edge of summer being given over largely to experimentation on the part of producers preparatory to the opening of a new dramatic year.

David Belasco has for years demonstrated the wisdom of a few weeks' presentation of new pieces in the late spring preliminary to their more permanent offering in the late summer or early fall. The Shuberts too adhere to this habit, with other producers admitting the advisability of the policy by its adoption, the latest convert to the plan being A. H. Woods, who furnishes us the sole novelty of the current week in a new farce by a new playwright which has its premiere performance on the stage of the Belasco Theater on Wednesday evening of this week.

The name of the piece is "His Bridal Night," the author, Lawrence Rising, a name new in the theater, while the featured members of the company engaged by Mr. Woods are Roszika and Yansci Dolly, the twin sisters whose agile and graceful dancing have won them a high place in vaudeville and spectacular musical revues for numerous seasons past.

That these delightful terpsichorean artists should come at last to starline exploitation is quite in the nature of the theater, and but a repetition of history. Managers are always on the qui vive for specialists whose ability would seem to justify broader responsibilities than are assumed in a single vaudeville act, whether presented in the variety theater or as part and parcel of the hodge-podge bearing the more pretentious name of "revue." Sometimes their experimentation uncovers a versatility of gifts on the part of the folk thus asked worthy the enlargement of their artistic sphere.

More frequently the unwisdom of such a course has been demonstrated at such financial cost as to cause the producer making the experiment to wish to heaven he had let well enough alone. A notable example of this is the case of Annette Kellerman, whose aquatic feats furnish ample interest for some twenty minutes of a vaudeville program, but proved insufficient, without the support of other talents, for a full evening's entertainment.

Eva Tanguay is another entertainer whom managers have unsuccessfully endeavored to star in musical comedy. As a vaudeville headliner Miss Tanguay's grotesque piffle succeeds in extracting the cash of a gullible public. But when her appeal as a sartorial display and untiring contortionist is taxed beyond her vaudeville turn the answer is financial disaster to the producer who has believed in her ability to hold an audience interested for a longer period, and in a vehicle demanding anything of genuine vocal or histrionic ability.

There are numerous other instances that might be cited but these are perhaps the two most notable, and serve to point my comment concerning the pleasure which the Dolly Sisters have heretofore given us in vaudeville and revue, and account for a very natural speculation as to the outcome of their exploitation in a farce which is said to demand not only their skill and ability as dancers but to require the services of finished farceuses as well.

While we await the first performance of "His Bridal Night" we will have an opportunity to see (tomorrow evening the annual dramatic stunt of the Pennsylvania Varsity boys when the Mask and Wig Club will offer "Whoa Phoebe" at the Belasco Theater, while "The Birth of a Nation" continues to draw capacity audiences to the National; the Poli Players present "Faust," Keith's promises an enticing vaudeville bill, and other theaters furnish a list of attractions ranging through vaudeville, burlesque, and motion pictures.

The passing of the current season is not without its note of pathos, for two of the greatest actors of the contemporary stage are saying farewell to an adoring public.

Concluding a career of splendid achievement E. H. Sothern bids good-bye to the stage in graceful and generous manner with his two weeks' appearance in "If I Were King" at the Shubert Theater, New York, for the benefit of the Actor's Fund. Mr. Sothern's personal and professional life has been an inspiration to the folk with whom he has been associated in his work, as well as to his public, and his retirement will leave a void difficult to fill.

The fine, familiar figure of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson passes from our boards with the following characteristic farewell message to the American public, written for the New York Times by the illustrious Englishman upon the eve of his retirement:

"After forty years on the stage, I have said my farewell. Thirty years ago I first came to America—with your beautiful and adored actress, Mary Anderson. I have since visited your hospitable country many times and am happy to count among my closest friends many of your people. My wife, Gertrude Elliott, who is not retiring from the stage, but may, I hope, have the honor of playing before you again, was one of your countrywomen. Why, then, should I not feel deeply indebted to America, when you have given me both encouragement in the pursuit of ideals and aid of a practical nature? It is with a feeling of real sadness that today I leave your shores, never to return again as an actor, but I feel that the time has come for me to step aside. The younger generation is knocking at the door, and I am happy to feel sympathy for these young men and women, on both sides of the ocean, who stand on the threshold of their careers. Theirs will be a great work, a great opportunity, for a new era of achievement is about to dawn for the stage. Better plays, better acting, and better producing mark the theater of today than at any time in the past.

"I am very happy to see a closer bond constantly growing between the English-speaking races, and it is fitting that the theater should help to make stronger this relationship. At the present time, when the Shakespeare Tercentenary is in the minds of the public, we can the more rejoice in our mutual ownership of this greatest of all dramatists and poets. My message to the American public is to believe in the best, and to give encouragement to ability wherever it

is shown, but of this I feel certain, for you possess that ready sympathy and appreciation which is as delightful as it is perhaps rare. I am proud to have given my life to the stage, and the little I have been able to contribute to its advancement gives me great happiness to think of as I bid farewell forever to a calling that is both great and noble.

"Though I shall never again appear before you as an actor, I would rather say, not farewell, but 'Good-bye and God bless you!'"

"Johnston Forbes-Robertson,
"April 29, 1916."

THE CURRENT WEEK.

Belasco Tomorrow—Mask and Wig Club.

The twenty-eighth annual production of the Mask and Wig Club will take place tomorrow night at the Belasco Theater. The title of the show is "Whoa, Phoebe"—Phoebe being a mule of feminine persuasion, whose education devolves on a man named "Belam." This mule is pampered and petted, sung to, its hoofs manicured, and an almost humanizing element infused into its four-legged personality. This educated mule is stolen by the members of an itinerant circus and the efforts to find the animal form the plot of the play. The musical comedy is in two acts; there are eighteen musical numbers, three specialties and numerous dances of an unusual character.

For two months Charles S. Morgan has had charge of the rehearsals, assisted by Edward H. Rogers. Charles Gilpin has written twelve of the eighteen musical numbers and most of the lyrics. Both the scenery and the costumes are especially designed by Edmund M. Lavino.

The cast for "Whoa, Phoebe" is as follows: Robert W. Bell, P. Rees Dougherty, Paul J. Field, O. C. Wagenknight, Raymond D. Stevens, Edgar D. Tyler, Robert F. McMurtrie, W. M. Wright, Preston B. Hill, Clayton McMichael, K. C. Witherow and Henry S. Hager.

With the presentation of "His Bridal Night" at the Belasco Theater for an engagement of four nights, beginning Wednesday, A. H. Woods presents the first of his theatrical offerings for the new season, and furnishes a new vehicle for the Dolly Sisters, Roszika and Yansci.

"Bridal Night" which involves them in situations of mixed identity is almost too true to life to be farcical. The play will afford the two sisters not only an opportunity for the display of their ability as comedienne and also for their dancing.

The Dolly sisters will be supported by Lucille Watson, Jessie Ralph, John Westley, Frank Thomas, and Harry Lilford.

National—"The Birth of a Nation."

That same meed of success which came to the D. W. Griffith spectacle, "The Birth of a Nation" in New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, St. Louis and other large cities has been the good fortune of the production here. At each presentation in the National Theater there has been a crowd sufficient to place standing room at a premium.

So widespread has been the discussion of "The Birth of a Nation" that it is hardly necessary to again outline the story. Suffice it to say that the spectacle deals with a big theme in a big way. No such wonderful photographic conceptions have ever before been made for the screen. A more complete idea of the conflict of armies in the field of battle could hardly be given, even were actual hostilities to be photographed. The onlooker sees a battle as only those on the very front line of fighting would see a conflict. Then there is a wonderful realization of the South in ante-bellum days when slaves worked in the cotton fields and were sold on the block. The great liberator who gave to the helpless the boon of freedom is seen in his very human aspect as the comforter of the oppressed, and the tragedy that snuffs out such a life is most impressive. Indeed it would be difficult to imagine a more effective and affecting scene than that showing the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in Ford's Theater.

The great historical value of this picture is shown by the large number of school classes that have been attending the performances. A body. There is no better way of telling the impressive story of the civil war and reconstruction.

Poli's—"Faust."

A dramatization of Goethe's "Faust" will be presented by the Poli Players this week.

Goethe's "Faust" was a celebrated old doctor who was consumed by an insatiable thirst for knowledge, but though he lived a long life in the acquisition of learning, his soul hunger was not relieved and he desired to be released from life which had grown a burden to him. Mephisto, the fiend, appears and persuades him to try life in a new shape. The doctor had only known it in theory. Mephisto would show it to him in practice and in all the splendor of youth and freshness.

Dr. Faust agrees and Mephisto endows him with youth and beauty, and in this guise he sees earth anew.

Keith's—Vaudeville.

Bert Kalmar and Jessie Brown will present at Keith's this week their new spectacular musical fantasy "Nursery Land," heralded as an elaborate scenic production in which are introduced several of the familiar characters of the Mother Goose stories.

The extra added attraction will be the Australian eccentric comedian, Albert Wheelan, returning after an absence of seven years. His presentation combines music, whistling, story telling and mimicry. Another inclusion will be Marie Nordstrom, who will present a series of comic and tragic contrasts called "Bits of Acting." William Morris will have capable support in giving "Mrs. Temple's Telegram." The first appearance of Princess Jue Quong Tai, who will sing songs in five languages; Foster Ball and Ford West in their character study "Since the Days of 61;" the Mosconi Brothers as "The Dancing Follies;" Heras and Preston; the organ recitals, and the Pathe pictorial, complete the bill. Today the bill will offer Adelaide and Hughes; Mildred Macomber and company in "Holidays;" Dream; Pat Rooney and Marion Bent; Harry Cooper; Allan Dinehart and company; Jim and Betty Morgan; Marion Weeks; Kartell; and other regular and special features.

Pictures.

Geraldine Farrar will be seen for the third time in motion pictures at Loew's Columbia today in "Maria Rosa," a Spanish photoplay founded on the drama of the same name by Guido Marburg and Wallace Gilpatrick. By her splendid work in "Carmen" and "Temptation" Miss Farrar firmly established herself in the motion picture world as one of the greatest of film stars. In "Maria Rosa" her work is said to eclipse her efforts in either of her two former plays. "Maria Rosa" tells the absorbing story of a young Spanish girl who is admired by two youths of the village. They are, apparently, the best of friends but jealousy takes possession of one of them and the other is falsely accused of crime and placed in prison. Maria is in love with the imprisoned Andre, but upon being told that he is dead she at last consents to marry Ramon, the jealous one. On the wedding day Andre returns and Maria, hearing a confession from Ramon, turns and kills him. Maria Rosa and Andre are then happily re-united. Wallace Field plays the part of Andre and Pedro de Cordoba that of Ramon. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Sessue Hayakawa, the Japanese actor, will be seen in "Alien Souls," a photodrama written especially for him by Hector Turnbull.

Gaiety—Burlesque.

Billy Watson with his Beef Trust Burlesques makes his final appearance at the Gaiety Theater this week. In response to many requests along the circuit he is presenting during his farewell tour his "Krousemeyer's, Al-ley" and "The Lucky Girl," which have become famous on the burlesque stage. Mr. Watson is supported by Frank Bambar, Kathryn Pearl, Jean Leighton, Lew Reynolds, Billy Swan, Margaret Newell, and Annette Walker. The chorus, from the proportions of which the company derives its name,